

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE CHRISTIAN CANON.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

In the Epilogue to the series of articles on "Christianity as the Pleroma," published in the August *Open Court*, there is a sentence that should be made the text of a sermon in every pulpit in the land, and it would be interesting to see what the variously-minded preachers make of it.

"If Christianity possesses sufficient innate strength to assimilate the new truths of science, it will survive and emerge from the present crisis stronger than before; but if it rejects the new revelation it is doomed."

What is the sole, great obstacle to Christianity's thus placing itself? Obviously, the Old Testament, which is a collection of religious scriptures written by men who had no conception of modern conditions and no knowledge of science. They belonged to an age of the world that is now past and obsolete, and the dogmatic effort to uphold their statements as ever present truths has for many centuries enormously biased and retarded human progress in science and morals.

The trouble with what is termed Christianity is that it is a hybrid—one-third European and Christian, and two-thirds Asiatic and Jewish. When launched by the apostles it was not a mere reform of the religion of Moses, but essentially a new Gentile creed with inspirations drawn from Jewish and many other sources. The early Christian Church was not long in forming a canon of its sacred literature; and it was after the New Testament canon was fixed that the Old Testament Scriptures were canonized.

Then the Church made the great mistake that has cost the world so dear,—binding the Jewish Scriptures in one volume with the Christian Scriptures, and calling it "The Bible," and asserting for the Old Testament the same infallibility and inerrancy and divine inspiration which it properly claimed for the New Testament.

The reading of the two Scriptures together confuses and muddles the Christian religion and instils in children's minds false views of the world's history. The Yahveh of Moses is an entirely different deity from the Father-god of Jesus Christ. And there are a number of stories and passages in the Old Testament that are unfit reading for the young. We should all know more about Jesus Christ and the Christian religion if it were cut loose from the Jewish Bible altogether, and if Christian ministers would no longer use any Bible but the New Testament, and would cease to read portions of the Old Testament in their services, and make it a point to select texts from the Christian Scriptures only.

There are many religious scriptures besides those of the Jews and Christians. Is there any more reason for Christian Churches using and canonizing Jewish scriptures than the Buddhist scriptures or the Zend Avesta? Mohammed certainly owed as much to the Old Testament as did the Apostles; but we do not find it bound up with the Koran as the bible of Islam. But Bible societies still continue to translate and circulate the Old Testament, despite the fact that the doubled and inconsistent two religions of the "Bible" make the Christian propaganda infinitely harder and less effective.

How illogical and inconsistent and also how disingenuous is the attempt of Christians to belong to two religions at once, and hold to two incompatible creeds! Christianity as it ought to be has been overlaid and obsessed by the Mosaic religion. All the criminal acts that in past times disgraced Christianity—persecutions, religious wars, witch burnings, and massacres are due to the teaching of the Old Testament; and it was its spirit, not that of Christ, that imbued such men as Calvin, Knox, Jonathan Edwards and the Puritans. Men that believed in a cruel and inexorable Lord of hosts, a God who was the model of an Eastern sultan—arbitrary and absolute, were themselves cruel and arbitrary. They taught that he who violated one small point of the law was guilty of the whole code, and that the dictum of the divine Ruler, no matter how unreasonable or immoral, could not be contradicted on pain of mortal sin; and they taught and practised this on the authority of the Old Testament.

Every once in a while we hear such expressions as "go back to Jesus," "return to the simplicity of the Gospel," "substitute the teaching of the Saviour for that of the Church," and "restore pure and primitive Christianity," etc., etc. But the reason why none of these schemes of reformation and betterment can be made effective is because those who suggest them hang on desperately to the Old Testament and persist in having a hybrid religion instead of a pure-breed Christianity.

The Old Testament should be relegated where it belongs, among the sacred books of the East, and churches, Missions and Sunday-schools should use and teach from the Christian Scriptures only.

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CHINA AND ACCADIAN CIVILIZATION.

In his article on "The Accadian Affinities of Chinese," referred to in the July *Monist* (p. 479), Prof. C. J. Ball proves the existence of a positive historical connection between the Chinese civilization and that of Sumer and Akkad. We see from the Hong Kong "Daily Press" of Saturday, May 29, 1909, that Col. C. R. Conder is of the same opinion. It would be thus interesting to discover that the ancestors of the Chinese are the founders of all the civilization on earth.

The Sumero-Akkadians are a branch of the Turanian race. Col. Conder says.

"Turan was the country beyond Persia—Turkestan—and that was the home from which this great race spread eastward. In China, then, there are now two great branches, the northern branch which is Mongolian Turkish, and the southern which is called Malayan, which perhaps in a softer climate became smaller, with smaller features, and which was more like what we consider typical of the Chinese of the present day. Both stocks have the short